

COMMUNAL NESTING IN THE SMALL SKINK, *LAMPROPHOLIS ADONIS*. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 38(2)382. 1995:- Communal nesting is well-known amongst *Lampropholis* spp. It has been observed frequently in two species, *L. delicata* and *L. guichenoti* (Greer, 1989 & references therein). Its occurrence in the recently described *L. adonis* Ingram, 1991, is therefore predictable.

On 12 November, 1994, a communal nest (Fig. 1) containing 53 skink eggs was found in Bulburin State Forest (24°31'S, 151°29'E). The eggs had been laid in a pocket of insect frass and decaying vegetation between sheets of corrugated iron. The 'nest' was in a small, well-shaded clearing in complex notophyll vine forest, 5m from the forest's edge. *L. adonis* was the most abundant skink species at this site. Several specimens of this species were seen beneath the corrugated iron, and had been observed at this locality previously, associated with a communal nest (S. Wilson, pers. comm.). To verify that *L. adonis* had laid the eggs in the 'nest', seven eggs were taken from the edges and centre of the egg cache and incubated at room temperature in moist vermiculite.

The eggs varied in length from 9.54mm to 10.76mm (n=7, mean=9.91), in width from 7.07mm to 7.94mm (n=7, mean=7.61) and weighed between 0.30g and 0.38g (n=7, mean=0.33). They hatched over a 24 hour period on 25th (4 eggs) - 26th (3 eggs) January, 1995. All seven hatchlings were identified as *L. adonis*. As the eggs were collected widely

across the nest and hatched over a short time frame, it is reasonable to assume that the entire egg cache was deposited by *L. adonis*, and that the eggs had been laid more or less simultaneously. The maximum clutch size recorded for *Lampropholis* (*L. delicata*) is seven eggs (Greer, 1989: Table 9). Presuming *L. adonis* produces similar sized clutches to *L. delicata*, a cache of 53 eggs would represent the nesting effort of at least eight females.

The hatchlings (QMJ59313-59315, QMJ59331-59334) measured 17.12mm to 20.36mm SVL (n=7, mean = 18.86) and had a total length of 39.47mm to 43.18mm (n=7, mean = 41.57). They weighed (preserved weight) between 0.17g and 0.20g (n=7, mean=0.18). All hatchlings were similarly marked to adults of this species (Ingram, 1991).

Literature Cited

- Greer, A.E., 1989. 'The biology and evolution of Australian Lizards.' (Surrey Beatty & Sons: Chipping Norton. 264pp.
- Ingram, G.J., 1991. Five new skinks from Queensland rainforests. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 30(3):443-453.
- Couper, P.J., *Queensland Museum, PO Box 3300, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101, Australia*; Schneider, C.J., *Zoology Dept., University of Queensland, St Lucia, Queensland 4072, Australia*; 25 August 1995.

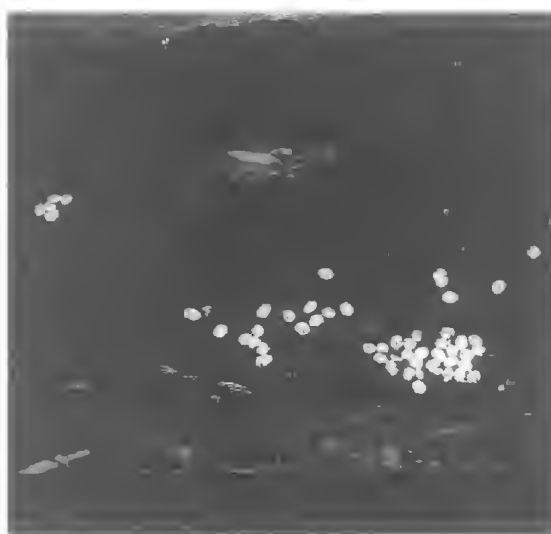


FIG. 1. A communal nest containing 53 *L. adonis* eggs, Bulburin SF.